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# INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE AND SOCIAL COMPULSION

BY

WILSON DALLAM WALLIS

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY AND TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY  
ON PENNSYLVANIA IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRE-  
MENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

JUNE, 1915




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### INTRODUCTION

OUR problem has to do with the relation of the individual to society. The incentive may be found in the interests that prevail in contemporary writings, more particularly in the contributions of Émile Durkheim and the *L'Année Sociologique* school. This school is prone to see in the individual merely a nucleus of social forces, a product of the social environment. For them the individual has no reality; he is but the carrier of tradition, the link which transmits the social of one generation to the social of another. Freedom from social compulsion, we are assured, is an impossibility—*L'individu n'existe pas*. His apparent impulsions are but the resultant of so many *vires a tergo* proceeding from a group. In attempting to demonstrate this the *L'Année Sociologique* has not confined itself to any one grade of culture: Durkheim has dealt with the social phenomena of western Europe, and with that of aboriginal Australia; his co-workers have studied Eskimo society and that of southeastern Asia; they have given us examples of this law in magic and in the realm of religion.

They do not deny that there are examples of apparent individual initiative, but contend that the initiative is only apparent. I have chosen for examination the spheres, respectively, of marital relations, aesthetic activities, leadership, and religious life. The choice is largely arbitrary; almost any other sphere would have suited our purpose equally well.

### EXAMPLES OF APPARENT INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE

#### A. *Marital Relations*

Despite the marriage regulations which are generally regarded as absolutely binding in savagery, despite the incest prohibitions

which seem so fundamental in social life and so deeply rooted in individual psychology, we find no lack of violation of both rules, particularly of those regulations which are regarded as obligatory but whose violation is not regarded as equivalent to incest. Such exceptions to the rule are found in Australia, in Melanesia, in Africa, and in North America. We shall return to these instances.

### *B. Aesthetic Activities*

The Torres Straits islander frequently strives for uniqueness in fashioning an image so that, as he explains it, posterity may say, when asked, who made this? "It was made by so-and-so, a long time ago man." The Chilkat chief of the Northwest coast of America strives for uniqueness in house-building and decoration for similar reasons. The Dahomey artist must draw and design without a pattern, for the rule of art is to follow the promptings of the mind, and to imitate or copy is to stultify art by confining its expression to the posited patterns. The Plains man or woman dreams and puts the content of this dream into a design; or a personal adventure may be represented in an art design.

### *C. Leadership*

The leader occupies in his group a unique position. The direction of a ceremony or a fight or hunting expedition, as the case may be, falls upon him; he directs the movements of the other participants. He may be able to reward or punish. He has poise and power; is active and sagacious; is peculiarly fitted for the task which he undertakes. We find the headman in practically every culture. Among the Iroquois even the captives were given an opportunity to show their mettle, bravery, and ability to fight, and might be adopted into the tribe. "If he proved himself skilful, useful, and especially wise, he might be promoted from time to time, until at last the captive might become a chief." (Powell.)

The significance of the facts cited above we shall consider later. Lack of space forbids a detailed account of more than one topic and for this we have chosen the realm of the religious.



*D. Religion*

Perhaps, however, the most interesting class of personalities yielded by our analyses are the messiahs or prophets who have arisen from time to time in various areas and given new trend and development to the religious life.<sup>1</sup> Chief among these North American messiahs and the earliest to introduce a new religion of whom we have record was Popé, a celebrated Tewa medicineman native of the pueblo of San Juan, who first appears in New Mexico history in 1675. "Later making Taos the seat of his efforts, he quietly preached the doctrine of independence of Spanish authority and the restoration of the old Pueblo life, which developed into a plot to murder or drive from the country the 2,400 Spanish colonists and priests." After ousting the Spaniards, Popé set about to realize the rest of his dream. "Those who had been baptized as Christians were washed with Yucca suds;<sup>2</sup> the Spanish language and all baptismal names were prohibited; where not already consumed by the burning of the churches, all Christian objects were destroyed, and everything done to restore the old order of things. This project to obliterate everything Spanish from the life and thought of the Indians met with the same enthusiasm as that with which the plan of revolt had been received, and for a time Popé, dressed in ceremonial garb as he went from pueblo to pueblo, was everywhere received with honor."

Another example may be cited in the case of Tenskwatawa, twin brother of Tecumseh, the Shawnee warrior. "One day, while lighting his pipe in his cabin, he fell back apparently lifeless and remained in that condition until his friends had assembled for the funeral, when he revived from his trance, quieted their alarm, and announced that he had been conducted to the spirit world. In November 1805, when hardly more than thirty years of age, he called around him his tribesmen and their allies . . . and an-

<sup>1</sup> The best account of these religions in North America will be found in James Mooney's, "The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890, *14th Annual Report Bur. Am. Ethn.*, Part II, and in A. F. Chamberlain's article on "New Religions," in the *Journal of Religious Psychology*, Jan. 1913, Vol. VI, 1-49. See also *Handbook of American Indians*.

<sup>2</sup> A native purification ceremony.

nounced himself as the bearer of a new revelation from the Master of Life. He declared that he had been taken up to the spirit world and had been permitted to lift the veil of the past and the future, had seen the misery of evil doers and learned the happiness that awaited those who followed the precept of the Indian god. He then began an earnest exhortation, denouncing the witchcraft practices and medicine juggleries of the tribe and solemnly warning his hearers that none who had part in such things would ever taste of the future happiness. The fire-water of the whites was poison and accursed; and those who continued its use would be tormented after death with all the pains of fire, while flames would continually issue from their mouths. The young must cherish and respect the aged and infirm. All property must be common according to the ancient law of their ancestors"—and many more directions enforced by promised salvation for the obedient and by the miracle of successfully predicting an eclipse of the sun which came off according to promise in the summer of 1806; followed by his "enthusiastic acceptance as a true prophet and the messenger of the Master of Life."

Is there in the circumstances under which the new religions are foisted by an individual upon the group, any indication that the individual prophet or messiah is obedient to some higher law?

Smohalla, the Nez Percé prophet, one of the most eminent of these introducers of new religions into aboriginal North America, insisted that at that time the Indians of his tribe were so helpless before the whites that they must cease to exist unless they had the assistance of a higher power. Smohalla found this higher power and obtained from it knowledge of the salvation of the Nez Percé from the white man's deteriorating influence. Should his tribesmen heed this sacred message they were promised strong and sudden help as surely as spring follows winter. The Kickapoo prophet, Kanakuk, who visited General Clark to explain his mission, closed with an earnest appeal in behalf of his people, asking that they be allowed to retain their tribal lands undisturbed. "Some of our chiefs said the land belonged to us, the Kickapoos; but this is not what the Great Spirit told me—the lands belong to him. The



Great Spirit told me that no people owned the lands—that all was his, and not to forget to tell the white people that when we went into council . . . I expect, my father, that God has put me in a good way, that our children shall see their sisters and brothers and our women see their children. They will grow up and travel and see their totems. The Great Spirit told me, 'Our old men had totems. They were good and had many totems. Now you have scarcely any. If you follow my advice, you will soon have totems again.'"

In the tribes strongly entrenched, flourishing in their aboriginal vigor, feeling little need of redemption so long as the outside pressure of civilization scarcely discommoded them, the new religions met with little or no success, for the favorable conditions were not present. In vain did the Paiute runners bring to the powerful Navajo the news of the near advent of the messiah and of the resurrection of the dead. To a tribe safely ensconced in the fastnesses of New Mexico and Arizona, apart from deleterious white contact, in numbers over 16,000 strong, owning some 9,000 cattle, 119,000 horses, 1,600,000 sheep and goats, rich in herds and silver, the message came in vain, for they felt in their prosperity no especial need of a redeemer. The messengers of good tidings "preached and prophesied for a considerable time, but the Navajo were skeptical, laughed at the prophets, and paid but little attention to the prophesies. . . . The doctrinal seed had fallen on barren ground."

In significant contrast with the attitude of the prosperous Navajo toward the new ghost dance religion, is that of the hard-pressed Kiowa with their predisposition to accept the messianic religion, promising, as it did, satisfaction of long felt and intensely felt needs, the fulfilment of a long delayed restoration of the more prosperous conditions which characterized this tribe prior to the contact of civilization. "Within five years the great southern buffalo herd was extinct and the Indians found themselves at once prisoners and paupers. The change was so swift and terrible in its effects that they could not believe it was real and final." Hence, when, in 1881, a young Kiowa known as Keeps-his-name-always,

began to make medicine that would bring back the buffalo, setting up for this purpose a sacred tipi, in front of which he erected a pole with a buffalo skin at the top, and making himself a priestly robe of red color, trimmed with rows of eagle feathers, his efforts were not looked upon askance by his fellow tribesmen; on the contrary, being so much in sympathy with his object and feeling so profoundly the necessity of its success, they warmly welcomed the effort and readily acknowledged his authority. His death shortly thereafter did not end Kiowa hopes which soon afterward (1887) centered in another prophet, one In-the-middle. After his failure to realize the powers which he arrogated and which the faith of his tribesmen bestowed upon him, the Kiowa, distressed and still hopeful, sent a mission to examine the claims of Wovoka, the Paiute messiah, though once more they were disappointed.

With the Paiute the theme is again Indian versus white man. The Apache medicineman, Nakai'dokli'ni, whose hey-day was in 1881, southern Arizona the field of his activity, early in his career began to advertise his supernatural powers, claiming to be able to raise the dead and communicate with spirits and predicting that the whites would soon be driven from the land. The Delaware prophet brought a similar version of help from a higher power that would drive back the English who had so extensively supplanted them on their own territory and leave the Delaware once more in command of their old lands. The Ojibway were misled by similar hopes and promises only to be left in greater destitution than before, as occurred with the Kiowa who were promised the return of the buffalo herds. South American messianic religions exhibit similar conditions.

The motive back of the great ghost dance religion that swept across the plains a quarter of a century ago and roused the Sioux to their last outbreaks was, at bottom, an attempt to restore the old tribal life and, incidentally to drive out the disturbing whites. From the first of these new messianic religions when the Pueblos drove out the Spaniards in the 17th century until the Sioux were inspired by the religious fervor of a new doctrine in the form of the ghost dance religion, there has been throughout, the driving force



of an outside pressure. So far as we may infer, these new religions among the aborigines of this hemisphere have arisen only when the tribe was hard-pressed and facing subjugation, perhaps annihilation. The individual prophet is thus responding to a higher law, the law that calls upon the individual to save his group. As a matter of fact, most of these attempts were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, if many failed and few succeeded in the object aimed at, they at least effected a solidification and unification of the tribe which was a prerequisite to success. As this itself was part of the object aimed at, few of these attempts can be considered complete failures. The prophet who introduced the Shaker religion among the Squaxin tribe of Puget sound, Washington, when his soul left his body and went to heaven was told at the entrance that he must either sojourn in hell or return to his people and teach them to live the good life. It may be that some such alternative is presented in one guise or another to each of the prophets in turn: it may be clear to them as to no other in the tribe that either they as members of the tribe must deteriorate with it or there must be a complete conversion, a new attitude and new morals. In practically all of these religions the inculcation of new moral qualities of a very high order is one of its predominant features, the prophet is in almost every instance a reformer.<sup>1</sup>

These features are not peculiar to the new religions of North America but characterize those of many far removed tribes. In 1857, after a period of guerilla warfare with the English in South Africa, resulting in the confiscation of the natives' territory, one of these tribes hastily embraced a messianic religion which promised salvation from these ills. "An impostor named Umlanjeni predicted that if the confederate tribes slaughtered all their cattle,

<sup>1</sup> The messianic excitement known as the "Wilderness Worshipers" which prevailed in 1889 and '90 among the negroes along the Savannah river in Georgia and South Carolina, when one man after another proclaimed himself as Christ and promised miracles, may have been given some of its impetus by the felt white domination, since part of the promise held out to its follower by the first Christ, a mulatto named Bell, was that the world would come to an end August 16, 1890; on which date all negroes would fade white, all white men become black. (The promise contained a "rider" to the effect that all who wished to ascend on this last day must purchase wings from the messiah, Bell.)

destroyed every peck of corn, and left the ground untilled in the spring, that at a certain time their ancestors would rise and drive the English into the sea whence they came." The resemblance to the above North American religions appears again in what follows: "He further alleged that he saw in his visions the cattle belonging to the ancestors coming in huge droves over the hills, and that after the expulsion of the English, every man could have as many as he had provided folds for the eventful day. The corn pits also were to be filled without tillage. This delusion took possession of their fevered imaginations, and a number of tribes destroyed every hoof and left their corn lying in heaps to rot. Feasting, dancing, and warlike demonstrations occupied their whole time. In vain the Government tried to avert the impending ruin."<sup>1</sup>

Of the new Kalmuck religion that flourished in Altai in 1904<sup>2</sup> we know too little, as of the circumstances inspiring the New Guinea prophet described by Seligmann.<sup>3</sup> In the Philippine Bontoc Igorot religion of recent origin a prominent motive was the belief in the return of Lumawig, the culture-hero of this tribe, bringing with him new sources of strength for the old tribal life then fast breaking down.<sup>4</sup> A similar motive seems to have actuated the new religion introduced into the Punjab about thirty years ago by "a wretched creature named Hakim Singh, who lived in extreme poverty and filth, gave himself out to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and offered to baptise the missionaries who attempted to argue with him." One of the promises which he held out to his followers was the destruction of the British government to be followed by the conversion and conquest of the world.<sup>5</sup>

China has shown her understanding of the close relation between new religions and political development by requiring all the incarnate gods in the Chinese Empire to register in the Colonial Office at Peking. "The Chinese Government, with a paternal solicitude for the welfare of its subjects, forbids the gods on the

<sup>1</sup> MacDonald in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 19, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> See *Globus*, Vol. 89 (1906), p. 220-21.

<sup>3</sup> C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesian*, p. 656.

<sup>4</sup> A. E. Jenks, *The Bantoc Igorot* (Manila, 1895), p. 204-5.

<sup>5</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Dying God*. (The Golden Bough Edition.)



register to be reborn anywhere but in Tibet. They fear lest the birth of a god in Mongolia should have serious political consequences by stirring the dormant patriotism and warlike spirit of the Mongols, who might rally round an ambitious native deity of royal lineage and seek to win for him, at the point of the sword, a temporal as well as a spiritual kingdom.”<sup>1</sup>

The story of the prophets and messiahs of Judaism is similar. Moses, the law-giver and religion-giver rose at a time of great need, when the Jews were oppressed and in danger of losing the integrity of their national life. Most of the Old Testament prophets were inspired with the ideal of a social regeneration of degenerate Israel. It was especially at such times that promise was given of a messiah who would both regenerate Israel and raise this people to a position above all nations. Before the appearance of Christ there was not one prevailing idea of the desired messiah but at least two distinct ones, since there were two classes each with its own needs and hopes, nor were these always reconcilable not to say coincident. If Mr Louis Wallis's interpretation is correct,<sup>2</sup> the messianic movement found its source in the desire of the upper classes of Israel to have foreigners work for them while they, the successful peoples, ate the wealth of the nations and succeeded to the world's glory. “But the lower classes were infected with social revolution, and wanted to set *mishpat*, or justice in the land.” The final catastrophe of Judaism, the last attempt to get rid of the Roman yoke, was “directly traceable to a messianic uprising of the lower classes.” Although later in its history it was first adopted by the upper classes and by them imposed upon the peasantry (as in France, England, Germany, and most European countries) in the first centuries of its life Christianity was distinctively and almost exclusively the religion of the lower classes, of the poor and the oppressed, promising, as it did, regeneration and superiority that made the poorest rich, the most afflicted happy despite their misery. Such a religion was not for the higher classes because the oppression felt by them was the result of conditions external to

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sociology of the Old Testament.*

the nation not incidental to the social life as in the case of the poorer classes. The history of the Jewish hope for a messiah in the decades preceding the appearance of Christianity reflects the condition which we find prevailing in almost any region where messianic religions have flourished. In the second century B.C., according to Dr R. H. Charles,<sup>1</sup> the messianic hope was practically non-existent. "So long as Judas and Simon were chiefs of the nation, the need of a messiah was hardly felt. But in the first half of the next century (*i. e.*, of the first century B.C.) it was very different. Subject to ruthless oppressions, the righteous were in sore need of help. But inasmuch as the Maccabean princes were themselves the leaders in this oppression, the thoughts of the faithful were forced to look for divine aid. Thus the bold and original thinker to whom we owe the Parables (one of the apocryphal books) conceived the Messiah as the supernatural son of man, who should enjoy universal dominion and execute judgment on men and angels.<sup>2</sup> This Messiah would, after purging Jerusalem, allow no stranger to dwell within the gates: "The sojourner and the stranger shall dwell with them no more," says the Psalms of Solomon (written 70-40 B.C.). "As for the ungodly nations he will destroy them with the word of his mouth; the hostile nations will be destroyed."

As regards the distribution and occurrence of the messianic belief the absence of it in certain Jewish apocryphal literature is no less significant than its presence in other writings. We find it prevalent in the literature of doctrinally and politically torn Palestine during the century or more preceding the appearance of Christ and in the first century of our era.<sup>3</sup> In none of the Alexandrian literature of these centuries do we, however, find expression of the hope of a personal messiah. This Alexandrian absence is for Maldwyn Hughes<sup>4</sup> "explained by the fact that, removed from the

<sup>1</sup> See his *Eschatology, etc.*, 2nd Edition; *Apocrypha; Between the Old and New Testament*. (Home University Library.)

<sup>2</sup> *Eschatology, etc.*, p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> See further on this point Maldwyn Hughes, *Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature*, and Shaler Mathews, *Messianic Hope in the New Testament*.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*



center of political aspiration and life, and influenced by the more spiritualized Judaism represented in the Book of Wisdom, the faith and ideals of the Alexandrian Jews did not suffer secularization to the same extent as those of the Palestinian brethren."

Although the destruction of Jerusalem dealt a severe blow to the Jewish political hopes it did not utterly destroy them; to this the book of 4 Ezra is witness in bringing the person of the messiah into the foreground in its portrayal of the future. Indeed, "the darker the present grew . . . the more eagerly did their minds turn to the comfort offered by the apocalyptic promises, which predicted an end of their suffering and the dawn of their delivery." (Buttenweiser.) This hope for the messiah, lying dormant in the consciousness of the people until roused by the nation's need seems to have reached its highest tension during the troublous times immediately preceding the destruction of the temple by Titus (in the 1st century A.D.) and again in the person of Bar-Kokabas who came forward in 132 and raised in behalf of the oppressed Jews a revolt against the Romans which lasted three years and a half.<sup>1</sup> The later belief that the messianic period would be preceded by many misfortunes and perplexities for Israel<sup>2</sup> was but the obverse of the situation that called forth these manifestations. It was so in the case of Serene of Syria (about 720) and of Obayah Abu—Isa ben Ishab, who arose three decades later in the Persian town of Ispahan to restore to the downtrodden Jews their ancient heritage. Such was the story of that wonderful sixteenth century dreamer and would-be messiah, Molcho, who for a time, owing to favorable fulfilment of prophecies, commanded a considerable following in southwestern Europe. The fifth century Moses who stirred up the Jews of Crete and convinced them of his supernatural powers, and Sabbatai of Smyrna (of the seventeenth century) appeared in times and places of need for salvation from the stress of harsh conditions of national and individual life.<sup>3</sup> It was in Poland where the Jews had but recently

<sup>1</sup> Lagrange, *Le Messianism* (Paris, 1909), p. 309; J. A. Greenstone, *The Messianic Idea in Jewish History* (Phila., 1906), p. 42-3, 89, 54, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Greenstone, III-III2.

<sup>3</sup> See Greenstone, p. 118-22, 194; 112-13, 213-27, 109-11, Sabbatai (Sabbatai-Sevi) is described by Voltaire in his *Essai sur les Moeurs*, and by Zangwill in his *Dreamers of the Ghetto*.

suffered terrible persecutions during the Cossack invasions, that the Sabbatian craze assumed most alarming proportions. These assurances of a bright future in which Israel would triumph and her enemies be bountifully chastised kept alive national hope, and fostered national solidarity and unanimity. "They fondled the hope with intense affection, the mother sang it to her babe, the father on all occasions related it to his household, the teacher impressed it upon the minds and hearts of his pupils—all were invigorated by the assurance to suffer and die, to withstand the onslaught of the enemy, and to remain faithful to their religion."

If it be asked why the Jews, of all people, have furnished so many examples of messianic religious revivals, the final reason is, of course, not forthcoming. Yet, it may not be futile to point out that they alone furnish us an example of a people deprived of country, scattered to the ends of the earth, subjected to every hardship, yet throughout preserving their racial integrity comparatively unimpaired, through the centuries.<sup>1</sup> Mr H. S. Chamberlain has compared the relation of messianic religions and national life to the relation between brain and heart; "If in physiological experiments we cut the connection between brain and heart, we have to arrange for artificial breathing or the function of life ceases; this the priestly founders of religion did by the introduction of the messianic kingdom of the future."<sup>2</sup> Nor does it seem to us pure accident and unrelated to social and national needs that the middle of the seventeenth century was in England a time of great religious as of great political upheaval. "The air was thick with reports of prophecies and miracles, and there were men of all parties who lived on the borderland between sanity and insanity. This was due chiefly to the long continued mental tension which bore on the whole population during this troublous period, and in particular cases to wholesale confiscation, by which families were

<sup>1</sup> For further account of Jewish messianic belief see Joseph Klausner, *Die Messianischen Vorstellung des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter des Tannaiten* (Krakau, 1903). An older and less valuable work is that of James Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah: A Critical History of the Messianic Idea Among the Jews from the Rise of the Maccabees to the Closing of the Talmud* (London, 1877).

<sup>2</sup> See his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1913), I, pp. 477-83.



ruined, and to confinement in wretched prisons, suffering from insufficient food and brutal treatment. Individuals even in the established church began to assert supernatural power, while numerous new sects sprang up with prophecy, miracle working, hypnotism, and convulsive ecstasy as parts of their doctrine or ritual."<sup>1</sup>

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ABOVE EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVE

There seem to be in the social and political condition of the nation needs that call forth the new religion, a divinity that shapes the messiah's ends, rough hew them how he will. On the other hand, though the messiah may initiate, he does so profitably only when there is a certain predisposition on the part of the group with which he works, a predisposition fostered by untoward circumstances.<sup>2</sup> In all these cases, then, we find the individual responding, as does also the group, to the higher law of self preservation and persistence, a law operative, of course, only under its own appropriate conditions and expressive of what society and the unique messianic individual does under such conditions. If now we return to the other classes of initiative given under the headings (A), (B), and (C), we shall, I venture to say, find these instances also to fall under some social law. The leader, for example, does not lead when, whither, and as he will, unless he wills in a certain restricted conformity with the group needs and desires. Whether the Australian son succeed his father in the position of headman depends upon the personal fitness of the candidate, that is, upon his ability to respond to the demands of the group. The Maori who would succeed his father must have the qualifications demanded by the group, that is, he must be orator, poet, warrior, hunter, and seaman. Among the Iroquois, the office of chief was bestowed in reward of personal merit and died with the individual. No man could lay claim to leadership who did not first conform to group demands.

<sup>1</sup> I am quoting here the interpretation given by Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 936.

<sup>2</sup> Max Nordau in his *Interpretation of History* (Trans.), 380, gives a similar suggestion.

The artist who believed himself independent of objective compulsion was far from free in that respect. The Plains Indian expresses new ideas but they are so completely encased in the old designs that the meaning is there only for the individual artist.

In vain does the Dahomey artist convince himself that he is pursuing a new design in the execution of which he is merely following momentary promptings. Though he believes himself to start and to continue without any conception of the figure that he is about to produce, an examination of the procedure of such a native artist is demonstration of the existence of determinants. When 'turning' in his free-hand design he must not make smooth curves but put a characteristic 'kink' in each. Moreover, having started the design, the rest of the figure must fall into a certain harmony of outline and balance of parts which, of course, limit individual choice. These characteristics are imposed by the culture, the artist merely varying the prescribed form though never departing from the general rules laid down by the conventions of the group. Here we find the creation of new objective designs but the newness lies within well-defined social limits.

If we compare with these efforts of the Dahomey artist those of a Chilkat artist consciously striving for uniqueness of production outrivalling preceding achievements we find the same law operative. There is here, also, creative artistic talent with resulting new objective art forms, yet the creation falls within certain clearly demarked limits given by the social environment.

This correspondence cannot surprise us. It means that the individual is restricted in his appreciation of art by previous experience. Yet what kind of appreciation is not similarly limited? If philosophy and science have their history, so likewise has primitive art its history of a development limited and guided by prior achievements. Could a workman who was not limited by such appreciations be an artist? We may suggest that perhaps he has grasped an esthetic principle which his group taken singly or together fails to grasp so that they, not he, are erratic. This is, indeed, a real issue; yet when we ask what criterion will serve us in judging the issue we must drag in some arbiter and this arbiter is a society



with which that individual must accord in order to win the approval that judges him artistic. It is difficult to understand how, otherwise, the correctness of their relative judgment could become an issue, or if an issue, could be decided.

In the violation of marital rules, each story has a different setting, each case is looked upon by the individual in question as a peculiar and unparalleled one; they are, in fact, as like and as different as those sex attractions in our own culture which give us the picture of dominant romantic love adventure.

In this matrimonial choice that sets aside social compulsion we have an example of the driving law of sexual selection appearing in the guise of enamored freedom of choice, superior to the socially directive forces, transcending both individual and social convictions, conflicting now with this one or with that as it gives expression to the one and thereby denies it to the other. 'Strephon have a choice,' is advice which the native follows even to his own undoing; and he frequently chooses contrary to the group regulations.

These instances of apparent initiative force the issue as to the reality of the individual as contrasted with the reality of the social. Is the social triumph complete? Is the social dominance ultimate?

#### DOES SOCIETY TRANSCEND THE INDIVIDUAL OR DOES THE INDIVIDUAL TRANSCEND SOCIETY?

In the instances of messianic religions given above, we seem to have examples of genuine individual initiative and of such initiative giving new trend to the social development. A school of sociologists assures us that this is, after all, but individual response to social call, the expression in an individual of social compulsion: that the individual acts as he does because and only in so far as society wills it. It seems clear that the society must be in some such state of preparedness and wilful seeking as adverse circumstances would appear to indicate; yet the directive force is not always according to society's well-wishing and not seldom operates to the group's undoing. Such was the case when the Eskimo of South Greenland became so absorbed in the new doctrine enun-

ated by their prophet Habakkuk as to discontinue hunting and live on the provisions of the previous winter. The Guiana Indians were so obsessed by the Messiah's words as to act upon the assurance that all must die within three nights, each to fall by the hand of his fellow, in order to secure resurrection in white skins wherein to repossess the land that was fast being wrested from them; some four hundred people felled each other in a bloody massacre which was yet not gory enough to entail the promised resurrection. Scarcely less misfortune came upon the group of Cretan Jews who followed their false prophet Moses, of the fifth century, to their woeful undoing.

In all these instances the individual mind seems to be, so far as this religious life is concerned, the larger mind, including within its purposes the social mind and prescribing the program which the social is to adopt and pursue. This adoption and adherence on the part of the social is frequently independent of their real welfare, and often directly antagonistic to it; yet so completely is society held in the grip of the individual that its impulse to respond sweeps aside every consideration of welfare, every faculty of critical judgment, all possibility of scepticism.

In the case of the South American Guiana tribe we find a reaction upon the part of society once the delusion and deception is comprehended by it. There is then revolt and probably death for the hypnotizer, as occurred in this instance. Society is once more in the ascendent, now that the influence of the individual is removed or checkmated. Thus the reality of the social dominance seems to be assured.

Is this recurrence of social authority merely the rebound of the social to its own or but a temporary restoration only to become subject again and again to individual mind? An Eskimo community furnishes an instructive example of this interplay of social and individual forces. In such a community it is not uncommon for some individual gradually to acquire more and more wealth than his fellows, and *pari passu* to rise in influence. He may brutally dominate the community until every member of it is in fear of his life, none of the man's small party of followers daring to revolt. A time



comes, however, when the wealthy Eskimo must give away to the community all his wealth, retaining not a vestige for himself, or suffer death for his failure to comply with the community's demands. The man who dominates the community, killing largely by caprice this or that individual who is displeasing to him, keeping every member of it in fear of his life, is eventually overthrown for finally the community summons up courage to antagonize him and appoints someone to kill the offensive member. Thus society is again in the ascendant and although other individuals will from time to time arise and repeat similar aggressions, the community will, in the case of each of them, eventually brush them aside, persist in its own way and triumph in its own right.<sup>1</sup>

It seems unwise for the sociologist to eke overmuch comfort from such considerations. The only reason why, in these cases, society seems to revert to the ascendancy as one only temporarily surrendered is because, in the history of the case, we start with the individual and stop with society, whereas we have no right to start or stop with one rather than the other. So far as the phenomena of recurrence are available they afford not a permanent ascendancy marked by periodic lapses of one authority rather than the other, but an endless series, a cycle of individual and social authority.

This group seems ultimately to transcend this individual; but it is not the same group in any sociological and psychological meaning of the term 'group' as that which was previously at the beck and call of the individual. If we retain the sameness in individual and society, respectively, we at once pass into the infinite series of which a cycle is the only way of representing respective dominance.

Nor is it clear in what helpful sense we may allege that the individual dominates only when society wills it since we find this dominance when society wills otherwise. It is true in the sense that an army surrenders only when it wills to do so, yet this willing

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the facts see Nelson's account of Alaska Eskimo published in the *18th Annual Report Bur. Am. Ethn.*; Dr E. W. Hawkes, who has been three years resident with the Alaska Eskimo gives confirmatory data.

occurs under such untoward circumstances, when the act of surrender contravenes its more inclusive purposes and expresses the fulfilment of the broader purposes of the enemy, that we may well speak of its surrender as compelled by the foe rather than as chosen by itself. How we express it is but a point of view in description, since dominance involves always two things in conjunction and the phenomena can be described from the point of view of the interests and activities of the dominating or from those of the dominated. Our interests usually hover about the fulfilment of larger systems of purposes rather than of smaller ones, or of the negation of purposes; wherefore, we prefer to say, the man feeds or beats the dog, rather than the equally true and necessary correlate, the dog permits itself to be fed or beaten. When the dog procures food by self-initiated tricks familiar to itself and to its master we may prefer to say: The dog secures food from the master, rather than, The master gives the dog food; but our preference has not hit upon any greater truth. The student of animal psychology will probably prefer the expressions which describe these circumstances from the point of view of the interests and activities of the dog. So the social psychologist may persist in his attitude with regard to the reality and permanence of the social as contrasted with the illusoriness and evanescence of the individual because he has chosen the social as the orientation of his phenomena, and his descriptions are necessarily from that point of view. The antagonism between individual and social psychology, as between socialism and individualism, seems as irreconcilable and no more so than the original points of view assumed by these respective sciences in determining the selection of material and the manner of generating description. Society is no more a complete and independent unit than is the individual; each society has its own historical development and is a member of a larger society form which many influences and tendencies, if not all of them, have come. Once we start this regress, however, there is no justifiable reason for stopping this side of the beginning of human history, since any given society may be considered the result of continuous historical influences reaching to the remotest past.



The motives which lead the sociologist to resolve the individual into mere social and historical antecedents will logically compel him to dissolve the social group into similar historical antecedents. To do so is to give up the problem of society versus the individual. The positing of such a problem involves a treatment of society and of individual as distinct and complete, though reciprocal units. Accepting this point of view the social influences become, like the gravitational, one of the dimensions in which personality must realize itself; its development will be conditioned by many phases of the social dimensions whose determinations frequently more intimately concern individual psychology than does any physical dimension which circumscribes individual action. Oxygen and gravitational forces are, however, as necessary to genius as is favorable social atmosphere and impetus. Wisdom does not flourish without physiological nourishment:

The empty spit  
Ne'er cherished wit,

Minerva loves the larder.

The social seems merely a polarity or a dimension in which personality finds meaning and by which it is conditioned in its expression. How could it ever come within the grasp of individual mind unless individual mind were a self sufficient reality? Though social influences are largely responsible for the ability of the individual to grasp their meaning, he creates them as truly as they create him.









